

Appl. No. 10/713,266
Amdt. dated February 21, 2006
Reply to Office action of November 18, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) ~~In a distal~~ A positioning tip for the stable positioning of a distal end portion of an artificial joint stem into a bone canal and for guiding the distal end portion of the stem so as not to make direct contact with the inner surface of the bone canal when the artificial joint stem is inserted into the bone canal, the positioning tip including means for mounting the tip that is mounted on a cementless artificial joint stem at a position near the distal end of the stem thereof, ~~the distal tip guiding the distal end portion of the stem so as not to make direct contact with the inner surface of a bone canal when the artificial joint stem is inserted into the bone canal while achieving stable positioning of the distal end portion of the stem in the bone canal when the insertion is completed, the improvement wherein said distal positioning tip is made of a biodegradable and absorbable material and wherein the means for mounting the tip is at a position that is offset from the center axis of the positioning tip.~~

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9. (Currently amended) The ~~distal~~ positioning tip for positioning an artificial joint stem according to claim 8, wherein the ~~distal~~ positioning tip has a diameter, in horizontal section, which is larger than the diameter of the horizontal section of the stem at a position near the distal end portion of the stem, and wherein the ~~distal tip~~ means for mounting the tip that is mounted on a cementless artificial joint stem comprises mounting means such as is selected from the group consisting of a fitting hole extending axially through the positioning tip, a fitting protrusion, and a screw ~~or the like~~ that fits with the distal end portion of the stem.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Withdrawn) The distal tip for positioning an artificial joint stem according to claim 9, wherein the mounting means of the distal tip is a fitting hole which has a projection or a ridge that protrudes from the inner circumferential surface toward the center of the fitting hole.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently amended) The ~~distal~~ positioning tip for positioning an artificial joint stem according to claim 8, wherein the ~~distal~~ positioning tip has an outer circumference in the shape of a polygon or other uneven shape other than a circle.

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14. (Currently amended) The ~~distal positioning tip for positioning an artificial joint stem~~ according to claim 9, wherein the ~~distal positioning tip~~ has an outer circumference in the shape of a polygon or other uneven shape other than a circle.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Withdrawn) The distal tip for the positioning of artificial joint stem according to claim 11, wherein the distal tip has an outer circumference in the shape of a polygon or other uneven shape other than a circle.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Withdrawn) The distal tip for positioning an artificial joint stem according to claim 8, wherein the stem comprises a plurality of mounting holes disposed in spaced relation along its circumference near the distal end thereof, and wherein the distal tip comprises a plurality of pins inserted into the mounting holes.

19. (Withdrawn) The distal tip for the positioning of artificial joint stem according to claim 18, wherein the distal tips have different lengths so that projecting length of the distal tip is different along the circumference when a plurality of distal tips are mounted at appropriate intervals along the circumference of the stem of the artificial joint near the distal end thereof.